

17<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Development Plans Manager  
South Lakeland District Council  
South Lakeland House  
Lowther Street  
Kendal  
Cumbria  
LA9 4DL

**Re: Objection to Development Proposals for Warton Village AONB - Sites W87, W88, W89, W92, W93 and W95**

Dear Development Plans Manager

We are writing to formally object to the above development proposals for Warton village AONB sites (as listed above) for the following reasons:

- **Loss of Fertile Farmland** – All sites are fertile farmland and currently used for growing corn and silage for animal feed. The proposed development would mean that this fertile farmland is lost forever and could never be returned to its original state.
- **Increased Risk of Flooding** – The lower sites have had localised flooding and are at high risk of further flooding in the future because they are on a natural floodplain. The proposed developments would increase the risk of flooding in the future as there would be no land, hedgerows or trees to absorb any additional water leading to increased surface water. This means that the proposed development sites would need considerable financial investment to ensure a sustainable drainage system to manage the surface water during the build, prevent finished properties from flooding and limit water displacement causing flooding elsewhere. Such massive financial cost that the sites would need to prevent this happening means that it's highly unlikely that the land is 'financially viable' for such development. We're also sure that you would not want to promote such a risk considering the significant flooding across Lancashire and Cumbria in recent weeks (including part of Warton village) that has caused such personal upheaval and financial loss for local families and businesses by knowingly building on sites at risk of flooding.
- **Increased Urban Sprawl** – Warton village has already had planning permission approved for housing development on 3 sites – W34, W84 and W85. In conjunction with these existing sites, the proposed development sites are of a significant size that if all 9 sites are developed then the village would have considerable urban sprawl. The village would be more akin to a town which would negatively affect the scenery and character of the AONB. We are not against development, but believe that within a designated area like the AONB any development should be on a much smaller scale (ie, Hutton Gardens was built on an old

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brownfield site and consists of approximately a dozen houses and therefore hasn't negatively affected the scenery or character of the area).

- Lack of Affordable Housing** – We appreciate that there is a limited number of affordable homes being considered within the proposed development sites. However, the average wage in the local area is approximately £15,000-£20,000 per annum and are therefore concerned that the majority of the homes wouldn't be affordable to local people. This would potentially result in more 'second' or 'holiday homes' being owned by people from outside the area and would push the price of local housing up even further. Ultimately there would still be a lack of affordable housing if the proposed developments went ahead.
- Increased Traffic** – Development of all sites would significantly increase the amount of traffic on the local lanes and roads, considering that each UK household now has an average of at least 2 x cars. Sand lane is already very busy as it is often used as a 'cut-through' on a daily basis by locals and holiday-makers from Arnside/Silverdale to Carnforth, and is also heavily used on a regular basis by large vans and 4x4s towing trailers and caravans for the local 'banger-racing.' In conjunction with this, Warton Main Street is already congested with parked cars as the Main Street properties were built at a time before cars were on the roads so there is no off-road parking for these properties. This means that the Main Street is reduced to a single-lane with very few passing places, often causing it to become gridlocked when any vehicle larger than a car is trying to get up or down the Main Street (ie, coach, bus, mobile library, motorhome, tractor, van, 4x4 with trailer, etc) or if there are a number of cars travelling on the Main Street at once during peak/rush hour times. The increased traffic the proposed development would cause on the Main Street would just make it completely impassable by vehicle, and would mean that it couldn't accommodate any on-road parking and would have to have double-yellow lines on both sides of the road which would leave local residents on Main Street with no-where to park their cars and work vans. Also, one of the main routes in and out of Warton, Borwick Lane, is too narrow for 2 lanes of traffic with multiple blind corners. We have already had to swerve our car into the hedge on more than 1 occasion because somebody has been driving far too fast around a bend that isn't wide enough for 2 cars. Increased traffic from the proposed development we are sure would increase the risk of road traffic accidents on this stretch of road and would ultimately require the road to be widened. We would also like to point out how congested Carnforth already is with the main crossroad lights and how this would only increase if these sites were developed as this is where the majority of local residents in Warton village access local key services (as outlined below). A further point to make in relation to sites W92 and W93 is of safe access and egress on/off the sites via Sands Lane, due to the narrow access points, volume of traffic and related poor visibility.
- Lack of Key Local Services** – Development of all sites would significantly increase the need for more key local services. Firstly, additional bus services would be required for those new residents reliant on public transport. With increased traffic from the development sites (as outlined above) we're not sure where additional bus stops could be placed without causing further congestion or increasing the risk of road traffic accidents. Secondly, the local schools in both Warton village and Carnforth would potentially need additional pupil places for an increased number of young families that would be living in the area. Thirdly, the only local GP Practices are in Carnforth and the health services they provide are already working to capacity so additional funding would be needed to extend GP Practice hours and increase

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health services, or even develop a brand-new GP Practice in Warton village itself. Finally, whilst we have a local Post Office in Warton village there is currently no local shop where

basic groceries (ie, milk and bread) can be bought which for those who are reliant on public transport would be a necessity when a bus was unavailable.

- **Adverse Effects on Migratory Birds** – All sites are on a migratory pathway for birds migrating in and out of the UK. The sites are very important because a wide variety of migratory birds use the sites for both resting and feeding, especially as the farmland is used for growing corn. Should the sites be developed birds will lose their resting and feeding grounds, which may adversely affect the migration of the birds and character of the AONB.
- **Loss of General Wildlife** – Since moving onto Hutton Gardens we have witnessed a wide variety of general wildlife within the proposed sites including migratory birds (as outlined above), other birds including rare birds of prey (the peregrine falcons and sparrow hawks which nest in the Warton Crag area and use the above sites for hunting grounds), a fox that recently raised 2 cubs (the fox could be seen supervising her cubs at dusk on the above sites), hedgehogs which are currently in rapid decline (a 1/3 of the population have been lost over the last 10 yrs), field mice and shrews. This is not to mention a wide variety of insects including dragonflies, butterflies and bees all important for the local habitat in supporting the bird population and pollinating plants/flowers. We would ultimately lose a diverse home for nature which could never be replaced.

Whilst we appreciate development is needed we don't agree that these are the right sites in the right area. In view of this we would also like to propose the sites are 'open green spaces.'

We would like you to consider each of the points raised and we look forward to hearing your response in due course.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Boyd and Laura Hirst